Let God Be the Lord
(1/22/17)

Pastor Y. Joe Kim

Romans 9:14-26

14 What then are we to say? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! [15]For
he says to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have
compassion on whom I have compassion.' [16]So it depends not on human will or
exertion, but on God who shows mercy. [17]For the scripture says to Pharaoh, 'I
have raised you up for the very purpose of showing my power in you, so that my
name may be proclaimed in all the earth.' [18]So then he has mercy on
whomsoever he chooses, and he hardens the heart of whomsoever he chooses.
19 You will say to me then, 'Why then does he still find fault? For who can resist
his will?' [20]But who indeed are you, a human being, to argue with God? Will what
is molded say to the one who molds it, 'Why have you made me like this?' [21]Has
the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one object for
special use and another for ordinary use? [22]What if God, desiring to show his
wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience the
objects of wrath that are made for destruction; [23]and what if he has done so in
order to make known the riches of his glory for the objects of mercy, which he
has prepared beforehand for glory- [24]including us whom he has called, not from
the Jews only but also from the Gentiles? [25]As indeed he says in Hosea,
'Those who were not my people I will call "my people", and her who was not
beloved I will call "beloved".' [26] 'And in the very place where it was said to them,
"You are not my people", there they shall be called children of the living God.'

1. The Will of God

About seven years ago around this time of year, I was serving at a church in Virginia when one of the district superintendents of the NE Conference asked if I would consider moving to Massachusetts to serve a church here. I said "no thank you." I was happy in VA and had no reason to move to MA. At the time, the DS reminded me that if it's God's will, I had to move. After months of prayer, Christine and I were still not sure. One night, after talking with my son and daughter in Korea, my daughter said she believed that it was God's will to have us move. Seven years later we are here today, because we believed that our moving was the will of God.

Last Friday, we inaugurated the 45th president of America. Roughly half of Americans were happy, but the other half were not. I am sure we all may lean towards one side or the other. And I've heard that it's not good to talk about

politics in church. But I believe that as a church community, we need to pray and ask God for wisdom in our new presidential leadership. The question I'd like to ask us all this morning is one I've been reflecting on for some time: "Is the new president elected according to God's will?"

2. Is God Unjust?

We might say "yes" or "no." But what do you think God's answer would be to this question? I believe we can find the answer in Romans 9. In verse 2, Paul says, "**I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart**." Why did Paul feel this way? Paul felt this way because of the Jews. They were God's chosen people and had a special purpose. Yet these same people rejected Jesus and crucified him. These were Paul's people. And yet, there is a tragic paradox between the purpose and the actions of the Jews. Paul uses the chapters of 9 through 11 to discuss this issue. Despite being heartbroken, Paul says "**I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race**" (9:3). Paul was willing to have himself cut off from Christ if that would save the Jewish people. He was disappointed at the Jew's rejection of Jesus. But he still loved his people. In Romans 11:1-2, Paul asks, because the Jews rejected Jesus, **"Did God reject his people? By no means! …God did not reject his people."** In saying this, Paul shows his trust in God's faithfulness and God's unconditional love for the Jewish people.

You may be asking why this is important. This statement is important because he is convinced that God's plan will not change because of their unfaithfulness. At the same time Paul felt the call to reach out to the Gentiles and share with them the good news of Jesus. On the one hand, Paul must have felt a sense of conviction for his mission. And yet at the same time, Paul shows here that he was also worried about what would happen with the Jews. When Paul saw the reality of the situation, he felt disappointed. And yet we see here at the same time, Paul put his hope in the sovereignty of God. In verses 11-12, Paul reminds us of God's choice of Jacob: "**before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad--in order that God's purpose in election might stand…. she was told, "The older will serve the younger**."

Paul asks the question, is what happened to Jacob and Esau fair? From the human perspective, it is not fair. The older brother should have been served by the younger, not the other way around. But from God's perspective, God's plan was right and true. This is why Paul says in verse 14, "**not at all**." Paul stresses here that we might think this is not just, but for God, these actions are done with the perfect plan that God had in mind. To emphasize the sovereignty

of God, Paul says that God uses Pharaoh to teach the Israelites who God is: **"I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden."** If we accept God's sovereignty as the creator, no one can argue what God does.

3. God's Intervention

What does Jesus say about God's sovereignty? In Matthew 6:25-26 Jesus reminds us that God gets involved in our daily lives. The verse tells us: "**do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. …Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them."** Yet, we know that it can be very difficult to recognize God's intervention in our lives when things don't go well or don't go as well as we hope.

Let us think about Joseph's case in Genesis chapter 37. When his brothers were going to kill him, God didn't intervene (37:18-20). When they threw him into a pit, God did not protect him at all. When Joseph was sold into slavery and sent to Egypt, God didn't do anything. When he was falsely accused by Potiphar's wife and thrown into prison, God didn't intervene. However, after Jacob, Joseph's father dies, Joseph tells his brothers, **"You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them"** (Gen 50:20).

When Joseph was in trouble, he may not have felt like God was present in his life. Joseph may have felt very alone or confused during those times. And yet, Joseph realized later that God was always with him; caring for him and intervening throughout his entire life. We see here and in many other places that God's intervention is not always so obvious. And yet, the writers of the Bible emphasize again and again that God loves us, God cares for us in our daily lives, and God guides us and always directs our lives.

4. Let God Be the Lord

Many have said that this year's presidential election has made America divided. Many have lamented that the whole process of the election has just proven that all human beings can disappoint us. We have learned that people are full of issues and wrongdoings. We have seen that people and the process are far from perfect. We have experienced that even though someone becomes our

leader, pastor, friends, or part of our family, no one will be perfect or in many cases even close to perfect. What we have seen however is that God is still sovereign no matter who is in charge and no matter what the situation may be. God is our creator, sustainer, and redeemer. No matter what is happening in the world, God is in charge and we need and always will need God to be the Lord of our world.

Sometimes we may want to complain to God. But Paul says in verse 21. **"Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?"** The potter is the creator of the clay. He decides what the clay will become. In this, Paul reminds us that God is our creator. In the same way in verse 25 citing Hosea 2:23 we read, **"I will call them 'my people' who are not my people; and I will call her 'my loved one' who is not my loved one**." The prophet Hosea foretold hundreds of years before Jesus' birth that God would bring the Gentiles into his family. And just like a potter, Paul reminds us that God is our creator and the decider of everything. God's plans are long planned and are good. And the Gentiles have become God's people because of God's great plan and his mercy and grace through Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, we can't see what God has been doing for us. I believe this video clip will help us a little bit to understand God's mighty power. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UVOOYn2yjOA)

5. Conclusion

Not everyone can claim or deny that the new president has been elected according to the will of God. However, if we believe that he has been elected by God's will, we have to give thanks to God and pray for him because God has intervened in this process. We may not like what the new president does. But when we remember that God is the Lord and when we put our trust in him, we can have peace and wait for the better future. We need to keep in mind that God's plans are always good and God's sovereignty is from the beginning to the end of the earth. Psalm 33:12 says, "**Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD."**

6. Application

I pray that the new president and all of us are always reminded that God is our God and God is sovereign in every season. And I pray that God's wisdom is with the new president and with us in his and our decision making. I also pray that we trust that in all situations God is in control so that we can have the peace that surpasses all understanding and bring God's kingdom to our community and to the whole world.